CH2MHILL
Hanford Group, Inc.

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Simulated waste tank will speed Hanford cleanup

RICHLAND, Wash.— CH2M HILL Hanford Group has awarded a $2.4 million fixed-price contract to Los Alamos Technical Associates to design and build a test facility that will include a large simulated waste tank at the Hanford site.

The Hanford Cold Test Facility will be a key player in the effort to clean up millions of gallons of highly radioactive and hazardous waste stored in 177 large underground tanks within a few miles of the Columbia River.

Equipment needed to retrieve tank waste and send it to a planned treatment plant will be demonstrated and developed at the facility north of Richland, Wash.

The centerpiece of the facility is a 75-foot diameter, open-top, steel tank. The tank will be the same diameter as a one-million-gallon Hanford tank. A superstructure will span the tank, with platforms 35 feet and 55 feet above the tank bottom to simulate the heights of Hanford's older single -shell tanks and newer double -shell tanks.

"This facility is needed to ensure new technologies and cleanup systems work well before they're put in the highly radioactive and hazardous environment of a Hanford tank," said Rick Raymond, CH2M HILL Hanford Group vice president of projects. "We'll be able to train our operators on the actual equipment they'll be using in the field to do this important cleanup work."

Raymond said working out the bugs ahead of time will help the Department of Energy's Office of River Protection avoid the cost and delay of fixing problems during cleanup operations. The practice sessions in the simulated tank should also help operators perform cleanup tasks more safely and efficiently in the field.

The facility will eventually be capable of staging up to 600,000 gallons of simulated waste for cleanup demonstrations. The simulated waste will include sand, clay, soluble salts, and liquids containing sodium nitrate. These are similar to the three basic types of Hanford tank waste: sludge, saltcake, and supernatant liquid.

Members of the Los Alamos Technical Associates contract team include Thompson Mechanical Contractors, Mid-Columbia Engineering, and Morse Construction Group.

The facility will cover nearly 10 acres near Hanford's existing HAMMER training facility. Construction of the facility is expected to begin this fall, and the facility is expected to be ready for equipment development and testing in the summer of 2002.

CH2M HILL Hanford Group Inc. is DOE's Office of River Protection prime contractor with responsibility for storing, characterizing, and retrieving for treatment approximately 53 million gallons of highly radioactive and hazardous waste stored in 177 underground tanks.

An employee-owned company, CH2M HILL was founded in 1946, and today serves clients on six continents with engineering, construction, and operations services for environmental, energy, water, transportation, and industrial infrastructure.

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